Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Issue 603

jagannātho janmāṣṭamī ca

Jagannath and Janmastami

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तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

Sri Krishna Kathamrita
Bindu

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Son of Both Devaki and Yashoda

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur discusses that Krishna appeared simultaneously as the son of Devaki and as the son of Yashoda, along with the spiritual energy Yogamaya. As the son of Devaki, he first appeared as Vishnu, and because Vasudeva was not in the position of pure affection for Krishna, Vasudeva worshiped his son as Lord Vishnu. Yashoda, however, pleased her son Krishna without understanding his Godhood. This is the difference between Krishna as the son of Yashoda and as the son of Devaki. This is explained by Vishwanath Chakravarti on the authority of *Hari-vaṁśa*.

— Purport to *Bhāg.* 10.3.47

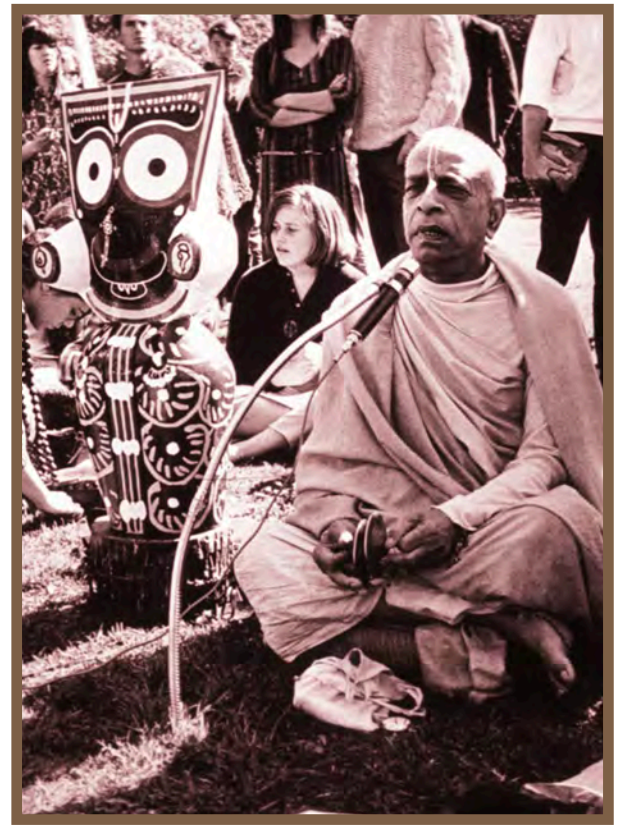


Photo by Mukunda Goswami

Jagannath has Two Birthdays

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

According to *Skanda Purāṇa*, the *Jyeṣṭha Pūrṇimā*, or the full moon day of the month of *Jyeṣṭha* (May-June), is the birthday of Jagannath. Jagannath is Krishna, but Krishna's birthday is *Janmāṣṭamī*, the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of *Bhadra*. Therefore, when it is said that the *Jyeṣṭha Pūrṇimā* is Jagannath's birthday, it is understood that on that day Krishna appeared in his form with big dilated eyes, a round face and his hands and legs shrunken. This is known as *mahābhāva-prakāśa*, or the ecstatic manifestation of Krishna, Balaram and Subhadra.

Krishna and Balaram are the sons of Vasudev. Krishna's mother is Devaki, and Balaram, his elder brother, is the

Cover: Photo of the Sri Mandir in Jagannath Puri. Unknown photographer.

Unknown photographer.

On his birthday, Jagannath gets a public bath known as snāna-yātrā

son of Rohini. Their sister Subhadra is the daughter of Vasudeva and Devaki. So they are brothers and sister, and they appeared in their forms as Jagannath, Baladeva and Subhadra in Purushottam Kshetra.

Because *Jyeṣṭha Pūrṇimā* is the birthday of Jagannath, on that day he takes public bath along with his brother and sister. This festival is known as *snāna-yātrā*, and hundreds of pots of water are poured over them. Because of this, Jagannath's color fades away and for fifteen days he will not give *darśana*. This is known as *anavasara*. During this time he will be painted with new colors, therefore he cannot give *darśana*. It is generally said that Jagannath falls sick, but that is not correct. The people say this, but it is not mentioned in the scriptures such as *Skanda Purāṇa*. *Śāstra* says that during these fifteen days his wooden form, carved out of neem wood, is repainted. Another name for Lord Jagannath is *Dāru-brahma*. "*Dāru*" means wood. So a thin piece of cloth is pasted over that *mūrti*. The old cloth is removed during this period and replaced with a new cloth on which the new colors are painted. Then, one day prior to *Ratha-yātrā*, Jagannath gives *darśana* in his fresh color and young appearance, known as *nava-yauvana veśa*. This is how it is described in the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

— From *Embankment of Separation*. Chapter 7. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar, India.

Jagannath and Janmastami

Puri Temple Tradition

Janmāṣṭamī is one of the main festivals in Jagannath Puri. It begins there seventeen days prior to the date of *Janmāṣṭamī*. Various artists, dancers, and actors enact dramatic performances of different pastimes from *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, including the killing of Bakasura; and subduing the demon Kaliya. The folk theatre ends on the day of *Janmāṣṭamī* with *kaṁsa-vadha*, the killing of Kamsa.

The day before *Janmāṣṭamī* special offerings are made to Jagannath known as *jeuḍā-bhoga*. "*Jeuḍā*" is a regional Odia term referring to soft, digestible, and sometimes medicinal food given during pregnancy or labor. One may wonder why they offer this to Jagannath?

Unknown artist. Rajasthan 1770.

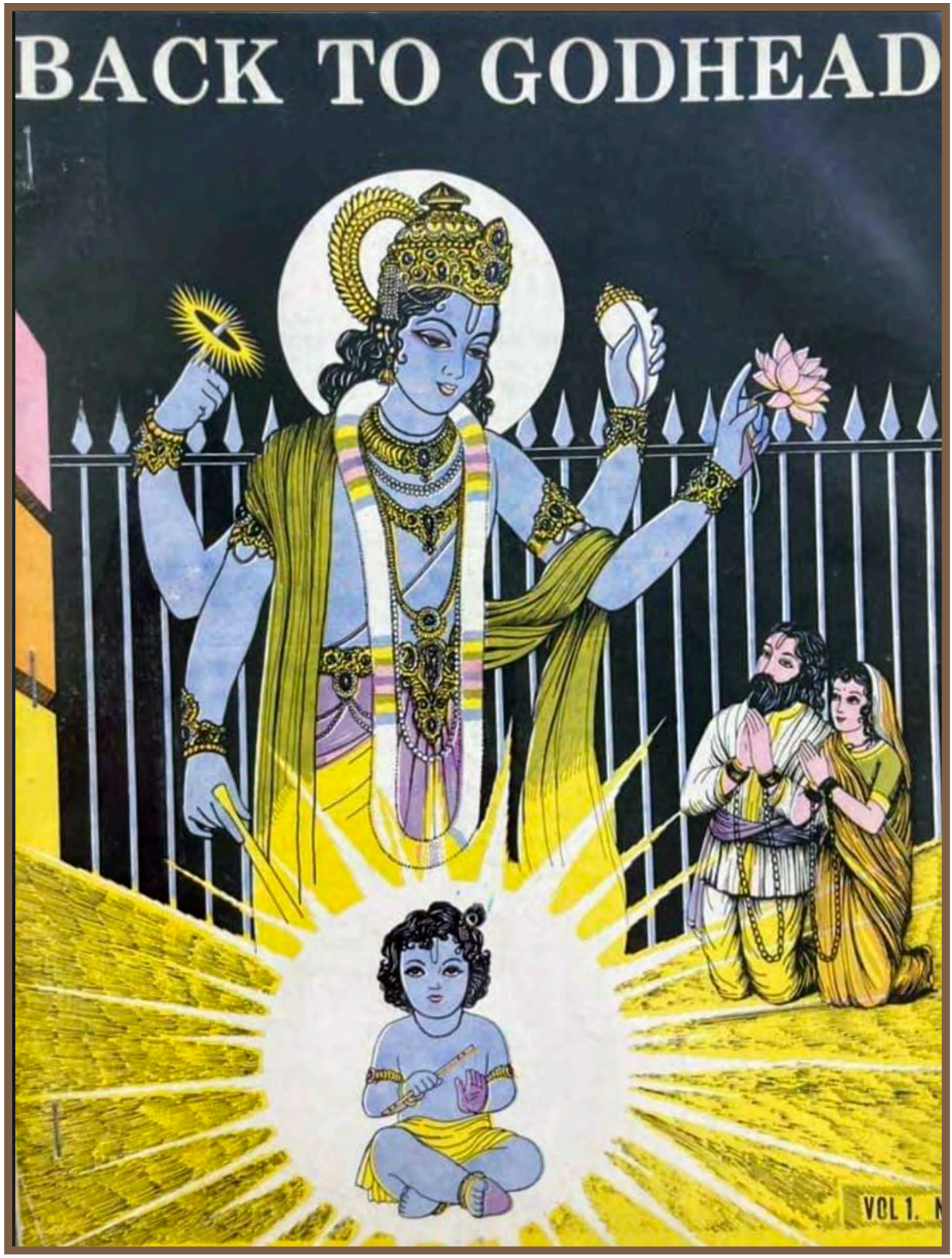
Vasudev carries Krishna across the Yamuna to Gokul

Unkown artist. 1725.

Gargamuni does Krishna's astrological chart after his birth

It would seem more appropriate to be given to Mother Yashoda. The *jeuḍā-bhoga* is offered to Jagannath to ease his "labor pain" as they consider Jagannath to be to be *avatārī,* or the source of all *avatāras,* including Krishna. Of course, Gaudiya Vaishnavas, following *śāstra* and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, see Jagannath and Krishna as non-different.

On the day of *Janmāṣṭamī,* the *janma-nīti* ceremonies in the Jagannath temple are done privately between 5:30 pm to 10:30 pm, during which public darshan is closed. After performing the *sandhya-dhūpa ārati,* (typically between 7 and 8 pm) the gate known as the *Jaya-vijayā-dvāra* is closed. The priest known as the *śuddhasuāra* cleans in front of the door of the *Bhaṇḍāra-gharā*. The *Jaya-vijayā-dvāra* is located between the *Garbhagṛha,* the inner sanctum of the Jagannath Mandir, and the *Bhaṇḍāra-gharā*, the secure room where offerings and temple paraphernalia are kept. Then, using fine powders of five colors known as *muruja,* that come from different natural items such as turmeric, red *sindhura*, charcoal, rice powder, and leaf extracts or mineral pigments that make green color, the priest with the title of *puja-pāṇḍā* draws a *maṇḍala* which serves as an auspicious platform to call the goddess Sashthi Devi to come. Sashthi Devi is a goddess who is associated with protection of children and childbirth. She is the guardian deity of newborn babies. In various Hindu traditions, she is worshiped by mothers for the well-being of their children, and is invoked during birth-related rituals. While the Puri *pāṇḍās* understand Jagannath as being the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they also consider him to be one of their family members and treat him accordingly. Sashthi's presence symbolically sanctifies and protects the divine child Krishna in the sacred reenactment of his birth, which the ritual re-enacts through the deity of Madanmohan.



Unkown photographer

Back to Godhead magazine cover from 1967 celebrating Krishna's appearance.

After establishing the goddess Sashthi, a *pīṭhāsana* (ritual seat) is placed, and a painting of the unborn child Krishna (called the *janma-paṭṭī*) is set up. A coin of gold etched with a likeness of Krishna is then placed upon the *janma-paṭṭī*. The Madanmohan deity, who is the *vijaya-vigraha,* festival deity, considered to be non-different from Jagannath (worshiped partly because of his small size in comparison to Jagannath) is then brought before Jagannath where he receives a special garland known as the *ājñā-mālā* (literally, a garland of sanction or order) from Jagannath. The garland is regarded as Jagannath's consent, expressed through ritual means. Madanmohan is then taken to a sacred place they have established called the *janma-maṇḍala.*

A ceremony is performed there called the *garbhodaka pūjā* (literally, "womb-water worship", a rite performed to honor the divine pregnancy). The *pūjā-pāṇḍā* visualizes Madanmohan as baby Krishna within the womb of Devaki. He chants a *bāla-gopāla-mantra* and washes Madanmohan's lotus feet with turmeric water. He then offers a mixture of cumin seeds, nutmeg,

Unkown photographer

Madanmohan, the festival deity of Jagannath

Janmastami and Varnashram

Srila Rupa Goswami's
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.63-64

ananuṣṭhānato doṣo bhakty-aṅgānāṁ prajāyate
na karmaṇām akaraṇād eṣa bhakty-adhikāriṇām

niṣiddhācārato daivāt prāyaścittaṁ tu nocitam
iti vaiṣṇava-śāstrāṇāṁ rahasyaṁ tad-vidāṁ matam

A person qualified for *bhakti* is at fault for failing to perform all of the important *aṅgas* of *bhakti*. But he is not at fault for failing to perform the duties of *varṇa* and āśrama. If he, by chance, happens to commit some sin, there is no atonement prescribed for him. This is the opinion of those who know the secret of *vaiṣṇava* scriptures.

Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur's Commentary: It is a fault if those qualified for *bhakti* fail to perform the required *aṅgas* of *bhakti* such as observance of *Ekādaśī* and *Janmāṣṭamī*. It is not a fault if they do not perform *varṇāśrama* activities. If they commit forbidden acts because of influence of previous *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, atonement is not required, since these pure devotees do not have a natural tendency for sinful actions. *Bhakti* alone acts as atonement. This is the conclusion of the *vaiṣṇava* scriptures.

— *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. With commentaries of Jiva Goswami and Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur. English translation by Bhanu Swami. Sri Vaikuntha Enterprises. Chennai. 2006.

Unknown artist. Rajasthan 1700s.

Jagannath Baladev Subhadra

Unkown photographer

Madanmohan

cloves, bay leaves, sugar, and ghee to remove all inauspiciousness. Then a senior temple *sevaka* known as the *mudirāṣṭa* (ritual officer) offers new yellow cloth, sandalwood paste, and auspicious *dayaṇā* leaves. Two high-ranking temple priests known as *mahājana sevakas* enact the role of Krishna's parents, Devaki and Vasudev, bringing Krishna into the world. This dramatic ritual represents Krishna's birth, performed within the sanctum as living theater or *līlā*. The *mudirāṣṭa* then performs a ceremony known as *prasāda-lāgī* which is an offering of food to the deity, signifying that the divine child has been born and can now be nourished.

Baby Krishna has ecstatically appeared in the Jagannath Mandir.

The head cook of the temple, known as the *pāliā mahāsuāra*, then provides butter, milk, and a medicated

Observing Janmashtami In Mathura Vrindavan

From Srila Rupa Goswami's Mathurā-māhātmyam

The *Ādi-varāha Purāṇa* states that when Lord Janardan goes to sleep, all holy places, lakes, and seas on the earth will go to Mathura.

[**Note:** Krishna sleeps during the four months of *Cāturmāsya*.]

caturo varṣikān māsān madhu-puryāṁ vasemahi
sarvāṇi tatra tīrthāni vasanti vividhāni ca

Let us reside in Mathura Puri during the four months of the monsoon season, when all holy places also reside there. (Text 161)

janmāṣṭamī-dine prāpte tatra yo māṁ prapaśyati
janma-koṭi-kṛtaṁ pāpaṁ tat-kṣaṇād eva naśyati

In the same scripture Krishna says: "For a person who sees me there (in Mathura) during *Janmāṣṭami*, the sins of millions of births perish in a single moment." (162)

bhādre māsi mamāṣṭamyāṁ yaḥ karoti mamārccanam
sarva pāpa vinirmukto mama sthānaṁ sa gacchati

A person who worships me during my *Janmāṣṭami* in the month of *Bhādra,* being free from all sins, goes to my abode. (163)

— *Śrī Mathurā Māhātmya*. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. Vrindavan.

Unknown artist. c. 1725–30. Himachal Pradesh, Pahari Kingdom of Chamba.

Celebrations for Krishna's birth

Photo by Amritesh Gaura Das.

Jagannath Baladev Subhadra on Janmāṣṭamī 2024 at ISKCON Bhubaneswar

herbal powder called *gāṇḍūṣa* — a traditional part of Ayurvedic neonatal care, which are offered to the baby by a lady temple servitor (*sevāika*) known as the *sarpamānahī*. This is followed by offering a camphor lamp. The deity of Madanmohan is carried laying down on a silver plate in a procession within the Jagannath temple complex to the temple of the goddess Bhubaneshwari. In the Puri tradition, the temple of Bhubaneshwari represents the Yamuna. Taking Madhamohan there is a symbolic enactment of Vasudev carrying baby Krishna across the Yamuna River from Mathura to Gokul.

A *pūjā-pāṇḍā sevaka* then steps before the procession, orders them to halt and questions their identity. Madanmohan at this point is sitting upright on the silver plate. This ritual represents baby Krishna showing his universal form to Maharaja Ugrasena. The *sevaka* portraying Ugrasena, then bows before the Lord and lets them proceed.

A temple servant known as the *beherā khuntiyā* then holds a seven-hooded deity form of the snake Ananta over the head of Madanmohan. The new-born child is taken in procession to a specially designated ritual platform known as the *nābhikāṭā-maṇḍapa*. There the *pūjā-pāṇḍa* offers *vasudhāra* — sanctified water and grains symbolizing nourishment to the child. Then, using *kuśa* grass, the *pūjā-pāṇḍa* ceremonially cuts

Mural in Raghurajpur near Puri. Photo by Madhavananda Das.

Jagannath peeks out through the cracks

Unkown photographer

Dressing Lord Jagannath in Puri during Ratha-yātrā *in his dress known as* Baḍa-śṛṅgāra-veśa. Baḍa *means great, and* śṛṅgāra *refers to the conjugal love of the* gopīs *and Radharani for Krishna. The Puri* pāṇḍās *consider that at this time every evening the* gopīs *and Radha come to see Jagannath.*

Unkown photographer. Courtesy of Manigopal Das.

Jagannath Baladev Subhadra in Kāliya-damana-veśa *— the pastime dress of Krishna defeating the serpent Kaliya. At ISKCON Durgapur in West Bengal.*

Unkown photographer

Lord Jagannath's sevaks *consider him to be their intimate family member*

Unkown photographer. Courtesy of Manigopal Das.

Jagannath at ISKCON Durgapur in West Bengal, wearing the go-caraṇa-veśa *— the cow-herding dress. This is one of Jagannath's traditional dresses in Puri that he wears duing the month of* Kārttika. *In this dress Jagannath wears peacock feathers, carries a flute and is dressed as a cowherd boy of Vrindavan.*

Unkown photographer.

Janmāṣṭamī feast offering at the ISKCON Kurnool Jagannath Mandir in Andra Pradesh

Madanmohan with his consorts Sri and Bhu in Puri. During the Candana-yātrā festival, Madanmohan is dressed almost every day in different special costumes. One of those outfits which is shown in this photo is his janmāṣṭamī-veśa — his dress for Krishna's appearance day.

Madanmohan's *nābhinālī* (umbilical cord). Following this the deity is bathed in *pañcāmṛta* — milk, yoghurt, ghee, honey, and sugar water.

At that time the various traditional Vedic purificatory processes known as *saṁskāras* are performed for the newborn child. First the name "Krishna" is whispered in the ear of Madanmohan — this is the *nāmakaraṇa* or name giving ceremony. This is followed by the *annaprāśana* — the first eating of grains; the *niṣkramaṇa* — the first visit outside of the house; and the *cūḍākaraṇa* — first hair cutting. All of these are done symbolically on the deity of Madanmohan to honor Krishna's childhood pastimes. It can be noted that in the case of normal human children these ceremonies are performed weeks or even many months after the birth. Madanmohan gets all of them on the same day as his birth. He is then dressed and receives the *yajñopavīta* — sacred thread, marking his symbolic initiation (*upanayana*).

Devotees then offer *arghya* (sacred water) and *puṣpāñjali* (flowers). This acknowledges Krishna's divine mission to destroy his tyrant uncle Kamsa. Madanmohan is then seated on a swing and offered *śītalā-bhoga* (cooling food offerings), which signify care for the infant

This concludes the rituals in Puri done for Krishna's appearance. — MDas. 🍊

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https://mahaprasada.home.blog/2020/08/10/janmastami-celebration-in-puri-jagannth-temple-tuesday-11-2020/

Lord Jagannath in his opulent suṇa-veśa with Sri Sachidananda Das Mohapatra Daityapati

Unkown Artist. Photo by Madhavananda Das.

A centuries old mural of Jagannath, Baladev, and Subhadra that was previously on the wall of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's house in Puri

Readers' Letters To Bindu

Regarding Bindu 602

Thank you for Bindu issue 602. Beautiful. May I reflect on the pictures? All are fantastic, artistic and deep — although my mind reacts to them differently

Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

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* The *gopīs* speaking amongst themselves about Krishna (page 5): They look so innocent, pure and happy!

* Krishna with the *gopīs* (page 6): This is my favorite picture in this issue. I feel so many emotions looking at this picture. The bodily gestures of all the persons are so elegant, so natural. Only one of the *gopīs* is dancing with Krishna while the others support her with their humble mood glancing only to her direction, not directly to Krishna. The colors, the composition are all perfect. A masterpiece. -- Gaura Nitai Das.

The latest Bindu was so deep and simple - in a good sense - again. These pictures are amazing as are the letters from the readers, especially that poem at the end. This image is so interesting, just today or yesterday I saw a similar one, where the *gopī*s were painted to be 'within' an elephant. I was wondering about its meaning. -- Orsi.

Our Reply: The elephant form with the *gopīs* is called *gopī gājadantī*. The elephant is a symbol of power. In the *gopī gājadantī* paintings the *gopīs* are the power. Krishna becomes subservient to them.

Thank you for last *Bindu* magazine. The poem from Becky Hemsley, shared by Rupamati Mataji, impressed me with its depth and message. Thank you so much for sharing *Bindu* readers' comments. -- Haricandra Das.